

Executive Registry
11-8908

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The Honorable G. Mennen Williams
Governor of Michigan
Lansing, Michigan

New Governor Williams.

I regret very much that I missed seeing you last Sunday. In case you should have called me from the airport, I am afraid you received no answer as Mrs. Dunles and I had to leave the house at 4:30 p.m. and we did not get back until later on in the evening.

Your letters reporting on your trip were interesting and I took the liberty of passing them along to some of my senior people here. It was most thoughtful of you to make this correspondence available to us, and I hope we can get together when you are next in Washington.

My people have told me of the very interesting and useful session they had with you and I want to thank you for talking to them.

Once again, many thanks and kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

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SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles
Director

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Executive Registry
11-87121

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT: Letter of 11 October 1959 from Governor
Mennen Williams of Michigan on his Visit
to Poland

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This memorandum is for information only.

1. The attached letter from Governor Williams contains no information of interest to the intelligence community, reciting as it does his impressions of two days in Poland.

2. The Governor's letter underscores two points:

- a) The very religious nature of the Polish people which he notes is already known of Americans of Polish descent.
- b) Polish patriotism.

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[]
James Angleton
Chief, Counter Intelligence Staff

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Attachment:

Governor Williams' letter
of 11 October 1959

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11-8595

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23 October 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Officer, Office of the Director

SUBJECT : Letters from Governor Mennen Williams

I sent to the CI Staff, copies of the three letters the Director received from Governor Mennen Williams while the Governor was visiting Jordan and Israel. At my request the Staff has prepared a brief note which could be shown to the Director, if, as and when he next plans to meet Governor Williams. The note and letters

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RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
Deputy Director
(Plans)

Attachments:

a/s

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STA

[Redacted] 14 October 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, CI Staff

SUBJECT : Letters from Governor Mennen Williams

1. I understand that Governor Mennen Williams of Michigan was briefed by the Agency prior to a trip he is currently taking to the Middle East. Apparently in response to that briefing he has sent to the DCI copies of three letters written from Israel (attached herewith). Presumably these were supplied to the Director for any intelligence value they might have.

2. I doubt if these have any information of value. Would you, however, have someone read them and (at your leisure) prepare a brief note for the Director on any points in or concerning these letters that he might mention to Governor Williams the next time the Director sees the Governor. The purpose here is to prevent the Director from seeming to have forgotten or never to have read the letters.

STA

[Redacted]
RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
Deputy Director
(Plans)

3 Attachments
a/s

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
VIA: Deputy Director (Plans)
SUBJECT: Letters from Governor Mennen Williams
of Michigan on his visit to the Holy Land
(Jordan and Israel)

This memorandum is for information only.

1. The attached letters from Governor Williams contain no information of interest to the intelligence community. They do, however, reflect the enthusiastic, eclectic interests of a dynamic personality. Anyone familiar with the breath-catching schedules customarily established for VIP's in Jordan and Israel cannot help but be impressed by the thoroughness with which the Governor observed and reflected on the local scene.

2. Two interests are revealed in these three letters which might warrant mention upon the Governor's return:

a. His knowledge of, and keen interest in, the Bible, which appears to have been whetted by his visit to the Qumran caves and subsequent discussions with Dead Sea Scroll authorities in both Jordan and Israel;

b. His rapport with American Zionists and familiarity with Zionist goals.

3. Incidentally, one of Israel's great personalities (and there are many), General Yigael YADIN, gave the Governor and his wife an illustrated lecture on the Scrolls and

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their significance. General YADIN, former Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces and eminent archaeologist,



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James Angleton
Chief, Counter Intelligence Staff

Attachments: 3

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CONFIDENTIAL

71-8712

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Francuski Hotel
 Cracow, Poland
 Sunday, Pulaski' Day
 October 11, 1959

Dear Gery, Nancy and Wendy:

Mother and I have just finished motoring to Cracow from Warsaw via Warka, the home of Pulaski, on our second eventful day in Poland. The hospitality here is fabulous and we are having a very happy time indeed. There is an awful lot to write about here, both reactions and actual impressions.

Before trying to give you the diary of our first day, which was really a full one, let me try to sum up four reactions which will help give you a picture of Poland's situation in the world today. These four reactions are:

First, the Polish people are fantastically patriotic, and no one and nothing will ever change that.

Second, the Polish people exercise considerable freedom of speech; under the circumstances, one might even say incredible freedom of speech.

Third: the Soviet presence, while not obtrusive, is always there.

Fourth, the Polish people are tremendously religious.

The manifestations of Polish patriotism in war and peace are so well known that it may seem unnecessary to give any documentation here. There are many remarkable examples that you and I know of, but I want to tell you what I, as a tourist busy with many things, saw in one day.

The city of Warsaw was not only battle-scarred but also the victim of a mad Hitler's scorched earth policy. The Nazi's systematically endeavored to dynamite every block of city, and they came pretty close to reducing all of the downtown area to complete rubble.

The Poles, in reconstructing the Old City, did so with a loving care for tradition that is simply amazing. They so wanted to preserve the old Poland that they actually reconstructed the houses just as they were down to copying the doorknobs! So you can as we did go into the old squares and see Poland just exactly as it was for hundreds of years.

As a matter of fact, the Poles are carrying this love of their country so far that they are reconstructing the huge old city walls as they were in the late middle ages I guess. When we were visiting the Old City, there were bus loads of children of all ages coming to see the glories of their ancestors.

A few hours later we went out to the palace of John Sobieski, the Polish King who saved Europe from the Turks at the gates of Vienna. It is a lovely country chateau much added to by later owners, but still a fine building in beautiful grounds. The buildings are in desperate disrepair but the Poles are about to restore the whole area such is their love of their heritage.

Now about the matter of freedom of speech. In a country with such a powerful neighbor one would expect a high degree of circumspection, but the principal butt of all jokes around here seems to be the Palace of Culture, the gift Stalin gave to the Polish people. It is an impressive edifice that towers over the city as Gery would tower over a five year old. It is of the Moscow style, which doesn't quite fit in with the rest of the decor.

The favorite joke around here is that the view from the top of the Palace of Culture is the best view in town - it's the only place where you can't see the Palace of Culture.

Inside the Palace, incidently, is a fine library and book store where you can get just about any book you need in any one of a number of languages including English. One that caught my eye was a work on economics by the West German Ludwig Erhard "Prosperity through Competition", a strange title perhaps for a socialist country.

Perhaps the outstanding example of free speech is the presence of foreign newspapers. The European edition of the New York Times is freely available as is the Manchester Guardian. I think the New York Herald is available too but I haven't seen it personally. There are also a number of French papers and some in German although I think the latter are special socialist ones. Life magazine can be purchased too.

The Voice of America which is jammed elsewhere comes in to Poland freely.

Finally, I was interested that among the many exhibits in the American photographic show entitled the "Family of Man" was one showing East Germans throwing cobblestones at Russian tanks. To be sure, there were no labels and most of the pictures had no propaganda story at all; but this was a famous picture that I should think quite a few would recognize.

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Well, just one word more. I have talked to quite a few people myself and with some of them I have been able to discuss, with the utmost of candor and sympathy, subjects that might be classified delicate. It was most refreshing and encouraging.

However, no one should ever get the idea that the Soviets aren't around. They are. The very large Soviet Embassy is just about across the street from the palace of the head of the Polish government. The Polish economy has been tied into the Soviet's in many ways, and a large neighbor would be hard to ignore in any case.

In one's talks I discovered that some people want to stop short of any direct unfriendly references, and certainly this is what the newspapers have to do.

To my last point, the very religious nature of the Polish people. You know this to be true from the Americans of Polish descent in Michigan. Let me give you just one example now, though more may come up later. We were at an after-show buffet at the home of one of the Embassy people. The correspondent of a German paper remarked that there was quite a stir downtown. The Polish people, he said, believed that there was a miracle taking place in that there was a glow like a halo at the top of the St. Augustine Church. He said there were crowds around the church and the police had set up a kind of blockade some two hundred yards away.

After we left the party, we tried to find the church. We got to the wrong one nearby, and I was staring up at the steeple when some one came by and directed us to the right one.

True enough, there was a police blockade but after being turned down, Ed Symons, from the Embassy, said we were diplomatic and they let us through.

As we came nearer the church, we could see crowds of people and we could hear singing. As we stopped we could see that there were votive candles lit.

We went to the church and looked up. There we saw a phosphorescent glow of unearthly quality at the steeple top. People were going and coming in great numbers, young and old, men and women. We moved toward where we heard the voices singing, there we saw hundreds of people, standing or kneeling, looking up to the steeple and singing sacred music.

It was indeed a most moving spectacle to see these devout people singing their praise to the Virgin who, they believed, was appearing to them in this unusual way. It is of faith and devotion such as this that the Polish nation is made. It is because of this consecration that the Poles have been able to maintain their spiritual and national integrity.

That there was an unexplained light there can be no doubt. Whatever the explanation the miracle of the Poles remains, a miracle of faith and devotion that has preserved a nation in the face of almost insuperable difficulties.

Gery, Nancy and Wendy, I hope these letters give you some idea of the world about you today, a world you will have to understand in order to maintain peace with your neighbors. The people of the world are coming ever nearer physically as the jet era comes of age. Wherever we go, they are lengthening the airfields to take the new jets.

Now let me give you a quick rundown on our day. We woke up after a strange sleep on beds made up like a mountain side. There was a wedge-shaped piece of mattress to raise our heads and shoulders plus a pillow so big it reached to the middle of our backs. The result was that you felt you were being aimed toward heaven. After the phone buzzed, the waiter was at the door with breakfast.

We started the day at the Embassy, arriving early with no one in sight except some uniformed Poles. They paid no attention to us until I said good morning to them in my best Hamtramck Polish. They then actually clicked their heels and gave me a salute.

We ran into Ed Symons, of Grand Rapids, who said no one else was there and sent us off to see the town in an Embassy car. Incidentally, Ed had met us at the plane the night before and got us through the formalities. We had a grand reception, because Professor William Haber's (University of Michigan) brother Sam had sent his driver there with a lovely bouquet of roses for Nancy. Afterwards we were the guests of Mr. Siscoe, the top man of the embassy with the Ambassador gone. Mr. and Mrs. Symons were there too. We had a marvelous dinner and a good talk.

We had a grand trip through the Old Town taking pictures not only of the buildings but of the school kids who all looked very healthy and happy. They are very polite too. When I snapped their pictures, they all said "thank you" in Polish, and when they didn't their teachers prompted them.

Back at the embassy we mapped out our stay in Poland. We are going to try to return to Berlin via Copenhagen rather than Zurich to give us more time in Warsaw and to give Mother a chance to see Copenhagen where she has not been.

Then to the Sobieski Palace, very lovely indeed. It will be a beautiful sight when they get it all restored.

Then to lunch. The food was excellent. I had partridge and dreamed of the opening of the pheasant season at home.

After lunch, which here is at about three, we visited the former ghetto. It was reduced to rubble but now is being rebuilt. There is one gutted building standing opposite a monument to what had happened. There were less than 300,000 Jews left of over three million, and only 30,000 are still in Poland.

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Then for a tour across the Vistula where we had a good view of the skyline symbolically dominated by the Palace of Culture, church towers and building cranes. We saw the large sports stadium that seats 60,000, which made me think of the football games we are missing. I hope you are enjoying them.

We went to the Palace of Culture, where we had a magnificent view of the city from the tower, as well as seeing the book store and the exhibit of East Germany. From here to see the American exhibit the "Family Of Man" which contains pictures, outstanding ones, showing all phases of life and death of men all around the world. It is an excellent collection of photos brought together by Steichen. It was asked for by the Poles and they really are patronizing the show. There was quite a crowd there when we went in.

We dropped into the main department store, which is, of course, run by the government. It was crowded, almost stampeded. People queued up for service. They seemed to have a lot of things, but not up to Sears.

The Symans had us stop for a snack. Their home is lovely. They have a darling daughter, Chantal, not quite in her teens, who won our hearts.

At the Donovan party we met not only embassy people but a number of distinguished Poles in the press and university. I had some tremendous conversations about the general situation, and also about setting up an exchange program for Wayne University in the Polish area.

Hope everything goes well with you.

Love,

Mother and Dad

ER-File

Executive Registry

11-8208



STATE OF MICHIGAN

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

LANSING

G. MENNEN WILLIAMS
GOVERNOR

Allen

September 24, 1959

Mr. Allen Dulles, Director
Central Intelligence Agency
2430 East Street
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dulles: *Allen*

This is just a short note to express my thanks for your kind help in briefing me on my forthcoming trip to the Holy Land, Athens, Rome, Germany and Poland. I certainly enjoyed talking with you and having the chance to become better informed on matters pertaining to our trip.

With every good wish.

Sincerely,

G. Mennen Williams

Governor

(EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FILE) *W*

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Remarks: STAT

With reference to memorandum from Mr. Bissell
[redacted], dated 14 October, enclosing
letters from Governor Mennen Williams, we
have received another letter which is
attached. This one deals with Poland
and should receive the same treatment
the other letters have been given.

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